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PRESCRIBED FIRE ATTRACTS A MEETING OF THE MINDS

A team of researchers representing five universities have teamed up with the Salt Lake Field Office, Bureau of Land Management to conduct a series of treatments, including prescribed fire, on public lands in between the towns of Rush Valley and Vernon, Tooele County. Fire officials are planning to conduct a prescribed fire treatment within the next week, weather permitting.

“This project has been interesting so far,” says Fuels Manager Brook Chadwick of the SLFO/BLM. Chadwick describes, “The area, known as the Onaqui site, is only one in ten sites to be chosen nationally due to its unique vegetation composition.”

The prescribed fire treatment is only one small part of a large scale project called, SageSTEP (Sagebrush Steppe Treatment Evaluation Project). Healthy sagebrush steppe communities in the Great Basin are rapidly disappearing due to invasion of non-native plants, catastrophic wildfires, and encroachment of pinyon-juniper woodlands. SageSTEP is a 5-year study that will explore ways to restore sagebrush communities. The project is fully interdisciplinary, with ecological, economic, and social components.

For more information check out www.sagestep.org or www.ut.blm.gov

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